

## Neighborhood Plan Update Phase II Workshop with Seniors & Persons Living with Disabilities

June 30, 2009  
Lighthouse for the Blind

### **Part I: Places and Connections**

Exercise to discuss gaps and opportunities for improving pedestrian, bike and transit connectivity. (Where do you live/work/shop and mode of travel)

They walk to:

- Bus stop on I-90: walk north on 25<sup>th</sup>, east on Massachusetts, north on Rainier to the bus stop. Need an audible & tactile traffic signal at Massachusetts & Rainier. Cross Rainier on the south side of Massachusetts to avoid the vehicles taking a right turn north onto Rainier. Problems – on the east side of 25<sup>th</sup> in front of the Red Cross (north of Plum), cars often block the sidewalk because the wheel stops are too close to the sidewalk.
- Bus stop on Rainier between Hill and Walker: walk south on 25<sup>th</sup>, west on Hill, and south on Rainier. Problems – The bus stop is dark and lighting is badly needed, especially on eastside of Rainier. There are often puddles on the sidewalk (west side of Rainier between Hill and Walker) due to a broken and uneven sidewalk that presents serious trip hazards. This is an area with tactile “bumps.” The “turtles” (tactile dots on the crosswalk markings on Rainier at Hill) are helpful but many are missing. They should be checked after each winter as the blind find the turtles very helpful.
- Recreational walking loop: walk south on 25<sup>th</sup> to Rainier, south on Rainier, east on Bayview, north on MLK. Problems – dark overhanging bushes on MLK between Plum & McClellan. Need audible/tactile traffic signal at Bayview & Rainier. No sidewalks on eastside of 25<sup>th</sup> by the Pepsi building (between Rainier & Walker). Curbing is needed to keep cars off the sidewalks in this area.
- They will walk to light rail station: south on 25<sup>th</sup> to Rainier, south on Rainier to station.

### **Part II: Building a Great Town Center**

Exercise to explore relationships between number of households, retail destinations, parks and walkability. (Creating a town center, housing density, building heights, etc)

- All traffic signals within 5 min. walk from light rail station should include audible & tactile signals for pedestrian
- They are comfortable with currently allowed building heights around station area.
- They could support up to 8 stories on the Lowe’s block if the building heights stepped down to the street. Would approve taller heights only with incentives: universal design, green design, affordable housing, affordable commercial spaces
- Make the light rail station plaza a true gathering place with a fountain, benches, etc.
- Clear pathways are needed from the sidewalks to the front doors of businesses.
- There were questions about the parking requirements for residential TOD (transit-oriented design) buildings in the station area.
- Need a way-finding system in the station area.
- Sidewalk eating areas can be a problem for those with limited sight. They should not encroach on the sidewalk. Blind pedestrians using canes need a barrier than can detect. They cannot detect ropes &

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stanchions but need something that forms a barrier at the sidewalk level such as planters or a picket fence. It is better if the barrier forms a curved perimeter rather than one with right angles.

### **Part III: Emerging Priorities and Opportunities**

Capturing new ideas or major concepts (new themes and remaining issues)

- General pedestrian problems
- Corners -- gutters fill with sand/road grit so it is difficult to discern the curb edge. This is a particular problem at 24<sup>th</sup> and Hill
- During the fall & winter there is often debris on sidewalks. Leaves on sidewalks are wet, messy, dangerous, and slippery. This is a real hazard for those with sight limitations.
- Uneven, cracked sidewalks in many areas but especially 25<sup>th</sup> north of Rainier.
- Need emergency call kiosks in station area (similar to those at light rail platforms or on college campuses) to ensure safety of night-shift Lighthouse workers.
- Would like to see parking behind buildings rather than in front.
- Would prefer small, local retail shops rather than more big box stores.
- Rainier "Main Street": They did not think it was a good idea due to a concern about the impact it would have on MLK traffic volumes. They were concerned about the number of trucks that would be making the turns required by this diversion and the potential safety impacts on pedestrians crossing those intersections.
- There was interest in a new, experimental infrared information technology that will audibly "read" signs.
- They would like a shuttle from the Lighthouse & Red Cross to the light rail station. The two facilities have many employees as well as people who come for trainings.